Kingston Guardian

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Young talent

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Balancing act

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TODAY'S PAPER STARTS ON THE NEXT PAGE

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- *At least 4 million who don't have hearing aids would benefit from using them*
- *On average, it takes ten years for people to address their hearing loss, which can make the problem worse*
- *About one in ten adults in the UK have mild tinnitus*

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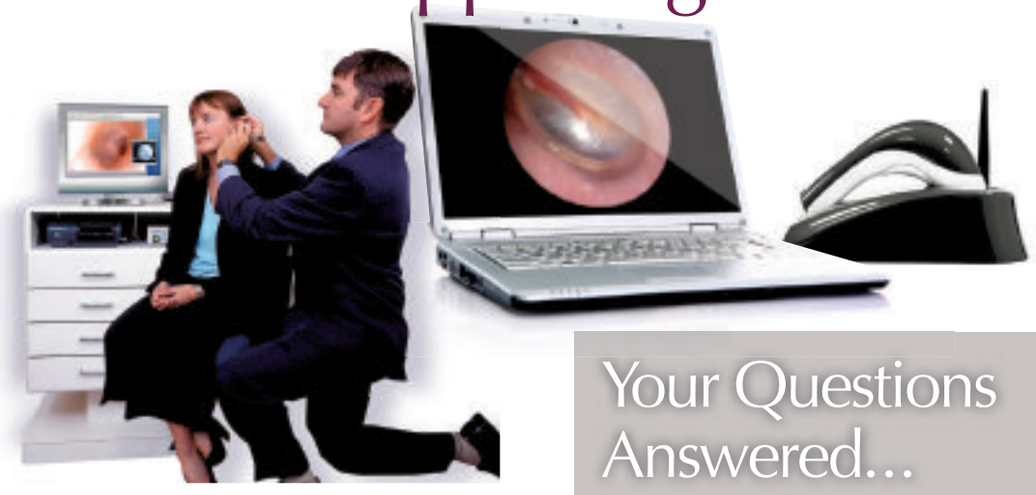

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Julie says, "The Better Hearing Clinic Event is the perfect opportunity to give your ears a complete health check and it may be something as simple as earwax that is causing your hearing problems."

Julie Murray

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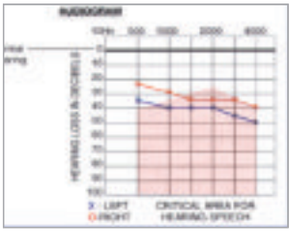

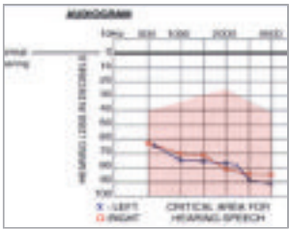

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Q. My wife says the TV is too loud for her. I feel my hearing is OK so would a test be a waste of time?

A. No! It is never a waste of time. Our dispenser will always give you the best advice and will be happy to confirm if you have no hearing loss! Your test is completely without obligation and there is no pressure to have a hearing aid, just honest and sound advice.

Q. My friend has a NHS hearing aid which looks big and uncomfortable. If I needed a hearing aid, would it be the same size?

A. We can offer a whole range of small and discreet in-the-ear solutions and you will be advised on the best hearing solution for your hearing loss. As we are independent of any hearing aid manufacturer we can offer a wide selection of hearing aids and styles from small virtually invisible aids to power aids for more of a severe hearing loss.

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Shopper banned from every B&Q in country for raising safety concerns

YOU CAN DO ONE

REPORTER
RACHAEL BURFORD
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london.newsquest.co.uk

A safety-conscious DIY enthusiast has been handed a life ban from every B&Q in the country after raising concerns about the company's New Malden branch.

Raymond Meerabeau, 64, visited the B&Q warehouse in Shannon Corner by the A3 flyover and noticed the cover had come off a fuse box near the lifts, exposing wiring.

He took photos of the fuse box and showed them to a manager – but was instead told off for taking pictures inside the store.

Mr Meerabeau said: "I showed him the photo and he said in quite an aggressive manner, 'You are not permitted to film on private property.

"'You should not be filming in here and I am going to ban you.'

"He failed to take my name and address or show me the relevant rules that say I'm not allowed to take photos."

Mr Meerabeau wrote a letter to B&Q's head office complaining of his treatment at the hands of the manager – only to receive a reply banning him from every B&Q in the country.

He said: "Then 'bang'. Two weeks later this letter arrives saying 'we have discussed your safety complaint and we are in agreement that you should be banned'.

"I couldn't believe it."

Confused, the B&Q regular wrote back asking how long his ban would last.

He received a reply from B&Q CEO of customer care Gemma Miall-Smithson which stated: "For the avoidance of doubt, please be advised that the ban is a lifetime ban and relates to all our B&Q stores. We trust this clarifies our position."

Mr Meerabeau said he would adhere to the ban, but was unsure it was enforceable in practice.

He said: "Are they going to put my photo up in every B&Q store in the country?

"I've also written to the Merton Health and Safety Executive about the New Malden store. I used to go to B&Q at least once a month because I'm very into my DIY.

"I'm going to have to use one of their competitors now."

A spokesman for B&Q said: "B&Q store managers do have the right to prohibit a person from entering their premises if the behaviour of the individual is felt to be inappropriate. This right was exercised during a visit made by Mr Meerabeau."

Life ban: Raymond Meerabeau outside the New Malden B&Q store with the letter banning him for life

Deadlinepix KT91779

Murder arrest

A man has been arrested on suspicion of murder after a death in a block of Surbiton flats.

Police were called to Surbiton Court, St Andrew's Square, at 4.25am on Sunday after a 30-year-old man was found "unresponsive" in a communal area.

He was pronounced dead at the scene.

A man, also in his 30s, was arrested on suspicion of murder and bailed until later this month.

A police spokesman said: "Next of kin have been informed. Formal identification will be scheduled in due course.

"Detectives from Kingston CID are investigating. At this stage the death is being treated as unexplained."

For updates on this story visit kingstonguardian.co.uk

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Defendant 'killed again', jury told

REPORTER
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A Surbiton man on trial accused of murdering his mother in her own home is already a convicted killer, an Old Bailey jury has been told.

Sean Heiss, 30, formerly of the Sheraton, in St Mark's Hill, has admitted killing Margaret Sheehy, 58, in June 2012, but denies murder.

He was extradited from Spain to stand trial.

Jurors were told Mr Heiss stabbed, punched and stamped on a woman during a brutal attack outside a Barcelona cashpoint three months later, on September 29, 2012.

The victim, Clementina Nauta Liscano, died of her injuries.

Prosecutor Sarah Plaschkes QC said Mr Heiss was inside an enclosed La Caixa cashpoint when Ms Liscano tried to enter.

Ms Plaschkes said: "[The victim] Ms Liscano arrived and knocked on the door.

"The defendant opened the door. There was an exchange of words.

"Ms Liscano left. The defendant followed her on to the street where he struck her."

Ms Liscano was knocked to the ground, Ms Plaschkes said.

Ms Plaschkes added: "He continued to punch and kick her very hard. She sustained multiple injuries to her face and head.

"People were walking on the street and a woman approached the defendant."

After a brief exchange, Mr Heiss "immediately returned" to where Ms Liscano lay, Ms Plaschkes said.

She continued: "With a knife he was carrying in his hand the defendant stabbed her many times.

"During this he lifted her head in order to display her neck and with the other hand he stabbed her."

The blade, which was later found to be broken, inflicted a "beheading-type injury", jurors were told.

Ms Plaschkes said: "The assault ended with a last kick to the head, which was inflicted with a stamping movement.

"[Mr Heiss] walked normally along the street. One of the people along the street shouted at him to stop but the defendant ignored him and tried to take a taxi."

He was then arrested.

Mr Heiss appeared before the Provincial High Court of Barcelona in relation to the attack, which forms the only conviction on his record, the court was told.

Earlier in the trial the jury was shown CCTV of Sean Heiss leaving his Surbiton flat on the way to Europe.

The jury was expected to retire to consider its verdict as the Kingston Guardian went to press.

Happier times: Sean Heiss with his mother Margaret

Follow this story at kingstonguardian.co.uk

Caught on CCTV: Sean Heiss visits a Kingston newsagent following the killing

Maid tied to chair in break-in

A housemaid was tied to a chair during a "terrifying" attempted robbery at a luxury home in an exclusive part of Kingston.

Two men broke into the house in Warren Road, an affluent private road between Coombe Lane West and Kingston Hill, while the owners were out.

But they disturbed a 56-year-old maid who was alone in the property.

When she went to investigate a suspicious noise she found the men standing in the hallway. One of them told her in Bengali they had got in through a window.

The other suspect then said in Urdu: "Tie her."

They tied the woman to a chair using a scarf, but while they were upstairs she managed to break free and raise the alarm.

The men then left empty-handed.

Police are appealing for information about the attempted robbery, which happened at 8.45pm on Friday, May 8.

The first robber was described as an Asian man of medium build, aged between 35 and 40, with a round face. He spoke Bengali.

The second robber was an Asian man with bad skin and of slim build. The housemaid reported he spoke Urdu.

Detective Constable Rachel Foley from Kingston CID, said: "This was a terrifying ordeal for the victim who was left extremely shaken and upset.

"It appears these men entered the property in order to steal but were not successful. Fortunately the victim managed to untie herself and raise the alarm.

"If you were in the area at the time and saw two men fitting the description, or have any information, please contact police."

If you have any information call Kingston CID on 020 8721 5849 or via 101, or contact Crimestoppers, anonymously, on 0800 555 111.

For more news online see kingstonguardian.co.uk

Former scout leader denies child images charges

A former scout leader from Chessington has denied making indecent images of children.

David Ashton, 59, of Selwood Road, appeared at Wimbledon Magistrates' Court on Thursday, May 28, and pleaded not guilty to six counts of making pornographic photographs and videos of children between January and May 2014.

Three of the images Mr Ashton is alleged to have made are of the most serious category A type, meaning they show a child engaging in penetrative sexual activity and/or involved sexual activity with an animal or sadism.

There were also allegedly three category B images depicting children involved in non-penetrative sexual activity.

At Wimbledon Magistrates' Court, prosecutor Mary Atere said that some of the images purportedly found by police showed "a boy aged five to six being raped" and searches such as "little boy tied" were also allegedly found on his computer.

Mr Ashton was released on bail under the condition that he does not have any unsupervised contact with anyone under the age of 18.

He will appear at Kingston Crown Court on June 10.

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Calls may be monitored for training purposes

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157,317 pages are looked at every month (Jul-Dec 2014)

Leader calls for devolved powers and more ambition

REPORTER
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Kingston has emerged as one of five south London councils bidding for devolved powers from Whitehall – which could bring thousands of new homes and jobs to the area.

But Kingston Council leader Kevin Davis has claimed neighbouring authority leaders "are not ambitious" enough in their demands.

The South London Partnership (SLP), a committee of council leaders from Croydon, Kingston, Merton, Richmond and Sutton, believes by working together they would be able to create at least 500,000 new jobs by 2036 and 20,000 extra homes.

At the commitee's first meeting this week, the group agreed a joint proposal for growth, including devolved decision making powers, 100 per cent retention of business rates, stronger roles in transport planning and greater freedom to deliver homes.

Merton Council leader Stephen Alambritis, who has been appointed chairman of the joint committee, said: "Our message to Government is quite clear – devolve us the powers we are asking for to unlock the growth potential in our region that will ensure London maintains its status as a global city in the coming decades.

"Together we offer the perfect platform to deliver a unique growth proposition benefiting both London and the UK."

But speaking to the Kingston Guardian, Coun Davis said his fellow leaders were not thinking big enough – and even questioned why people would want to live in Sutton.

He said: "Well 20,000 new homes across five London boroughs isn't a lot, is it? They are not being ambitious enough, not asking for enough."

Coun Davis said other councils were not realising the potential in having a stronger role in transport planning, control of bus routes and stronger orbital connections.

He said: "They are talking about ideas that have been going around for 14 years. I wouldn't mind having the boroughs better connected by the tram, say, with Croydon as a hub.

"But if Kingston, Sutton and Croydon were better connected then I might say: Why would anyone want to live in Sutton?"

But he added: "We all just want what is best for our boroughs. And we're all in favour of Gatwick expansion over Heathrow so we can bond over that."

In January, it was revealed Kingston Council had been in talks for six months with the Department for Communities and Local Goverment over seceding from Whitehall and ending the authority's reliance on an ever-shrinking central Government grant.

Coun Davis wants to forfeit the annual grant and instead retain 54 per cent of the borough's business rates, instead of the current 30 per cent.

He said: "In the first year this would not make or lose us any money, however, it would encourage us to attract new business to the area."

The news came in the same week Coun Davis announced plans to substantially overhaul the way Kingston Council is run.

Writing on a new blog "Putting People in Power", he promised a complete overhaul of the committee system and full council.

Coun Davis said: "I have sat in local committee planning meetings talking about where to place a bin store for 45 minutes and not a single member of the public has turned up.

"No decisions are made and you're left feeling 'What is the point?'

"The council needs to stop wasting money on pointless meetings.

"I'm not saying a council meeting is ever going to be like going to the cinema or something, but we need to get people more engaged."

Coun Davis said further details would be released in the coming weeks on his blog.

Power play: Coun Kevin Davis has said the other councils are not ambitious enough

Two years' jail for PO burglar

A man has been given a two-year prison sentence after he burgled a Kingston post office with a fake gun.

Danny Carrig, 19, of New Road in Kingston, was found guilty of burglary, possession of a prohibited weapon and possession of prohibited ammunition following a trial.

He raided the post office in Park Road belonging to RK Gupta on June 26 last year.

Carrig was sentenced to two years at Kingston Crown Court on Tuesday, May 26.

An arrest warrant has been issued for his co-defendant Paul Paradise, 35, also of New Road, Kingston, who failed to turn up to the trial having previously denied the charges.

Man denies touching girl

A pensioner has denied sexually touching a schoolgirl in a Chessington cafe.

John Nielsen, 69, of Old School Passage in Croydon is alleged to have sexually touched a 13-year-old at the Hunt's Cafe in Cox Lane between August and September 2014.

He appeared at Kingston Crown Court on Friday, May 29 where he denied the charge.

He will stand trial at the same court on September 29.

PROPERTY
HOMES TO BUY OR LET
PAGE 17

Power to kick out your councillor?

Is your councillor up to scratch?

New proposals by Kingston Council could allow people to set up a petition to remove their councillor if they are not meeting the standards expected of them.

If more than 33 per cent of the electorate in the ward signed the petition, then the councillor would be expected to resign and a byelection called.

Potential scenarios where a councillor could be recalled would include:

- If a councillor's attendance at meetings falls below 20 per cent
- If a councillor attends fewer than two full council or neighbourhood committee meetings within a year
- If a councillor is convicted of a crime for which a prison sentence has been imposed and the appeal period has expired without the sentence having been overturned
- If a councillor moves their main residence outside of the borough

The proposals are part of a wider programme of council reforms called "Renewing Kingston's Democracy" which council leader Kevin Davis will be outlining in his blog "Putting People in Power" in the coming months.

The constitutional changes will be voted on during full council in July.

Coun Davis said: "At a time of massive challenges for local government we need to connect better than ever before with local people.

"In order to do that we must win greater trust and that is exactly what these measures are designed to help us do.

"Most local councillors work incredibly hard on behalf of their constituents. But occasionally the behaviour of local councillors falls below a standard that voters have a right to expect.

"Under these new recall proposals, voters in Kingston would be able to do something about it; to kick them out of office and have a fresh election."

Extraordinary council meeting postponed

An extraordinary meeting to scrutinise the role of council leader Kevin Davis' role at a PR company has been postponed.

The meeting, scheduled for June 4, was meant to publically examine Coun Davis' dual positions as both council leader and chief operating officer of Cratus Communications.

Councillor Ian George was also due to have his work as a senior account manager at PR company Thorncliffe, which specialises in planning, scrutinised.

But following the sudden death of Coun Chrissie Hitchcock last week, the Liberal Democrats, who initially called the meeting, have decided to postpone it.

Lib Dem leader Liz Green said: "With regret we have decided to withdraw our request for an extraordinary meeting on June 4. We feel it would be inappropriate and disrespectful following so closely after the sad death of Coun Chrissie Hitchcock."

A new date for the meeting is yet to be set.

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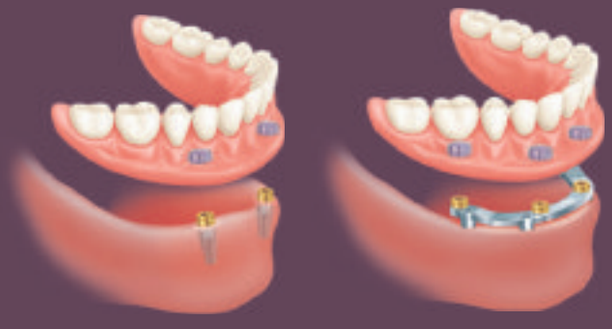
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What a waste

Landfill: 12m tonnes of food is wasted every year; foodbank vouchers, inset Deadlinepix KT75426

REPORTER
JON SHARMAN
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Be honest – how much food do you throw out every week?

The UK wastes more than 12m tonnes of food a year, according to the European Union, with households the biggest culprits. Shops and cafes get rid of plenty, too.

Now Kingston councillors are being sent on a fact-finding mission to visit a "social supermarket", part of a new London-wide scheme designed to sell surplus in-date food at reduced prices.

Councils can bid for a share of £300,000 to open one.

Kington Council leader Kevin Davis said: "It is extraordinary to think that supermarkets are throwing away perfectly safe and edible food when families on low incomes are struggling to put meals on their tables.

"I have asked council officers to work alongside our voluntary sector partners to establish what impact a social supermarket could have in the borough and to consider making a bid for funding.

"I have also asked for a visit to view an existing provision and we will be sending councillors to have a look at this in action."

Kingston food bank organiser Paul Pickhaver said: "What's great, and to be welcomed, is that councillors and the council are recognising the issue of food poverty in Kingston, and wanting to do something creative about it.

"Food poverty is a symptom of something else – there are underlying causes. There are other factors such as the cost of housing and low incomes."

The Community Shop, set up in Lambeth, sells fresh and packaged food at about one-third its original retail cost, while excess stock is made into meals for its cafe.

Budget advice, cooking classes and other training are also offered.

Last year an all-party parliamentary inquiry into hunger, comprising church leaders and MPs from across the political spectrum, concluded: "Our anger knows no bounds that hundreds of thousands of tonnes of perfectly edible food, which is euphemistically termed "surplus", is destroyed at substantial cost, when it alone could eliminate hunger in our society."

Mayor of London Boris Johnson hopes his plan will help low-income families put meals on the table, and save small businesses money on landfill costs.

Low income is one of the main reasons people are referred to Kingston food bank, the charity's latest figures show.

● **What do you think? Email letters@kingstonguardian.co.uk.**

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GRANT CHANGES: Kingston Council is considering changes to the way grants to the voluntary and community sector are awarded. New proposals would see the council moving to a commissioning approach and it is asking residents to give their opinions on the changes. A consultation runs until June 15. To take part visit **kingston.gov.uk/consultations**.

LIFT REPLACEMENT: Network Rail has asked permission to remove and replace an old goods lift at Surbiton station. The lift, installed at the listed building during the 1950s, has been disused for 30 years. The replacement would carry 16 passengers and improve access for parents and the mobility-impaired. Residents can give their views on the plan until Friday, June 19.

NEW FLATS: Residents have until Friday, June 19, to tell Kingston Council their views on plans to turn an old petrol station into serviced apartments. The site, in Coombe Road, Kingston, could be redeveloped to provide 25 short-stay serviced flats alongside a cafe or restaurant. Council officers will decide the application following a consultation.

Quack in the box: Young ducks take leap of faith

REPORTER
JON SHARMAN
jon.sharman@london.newsquest.co.uk

You may have seen the classic David Attenborough sequence in which the great broadcaster describes how ducklings leap from their forest nest to follow their mother to water.

Well, this is the suburban equivalent.

The proud mum, who has raised 11 ducklings so far, with still more on the way, made her nest in a herb box on a Kingston balcony belonging to Barbara and Trevor Harrison.

The mallard duck squeezed through the sixth-floor railings the day after her babies hatched, and called for them to follow.

Mrs Harrison, 75, of Albany Park Road, said: "One did [follow] immediately by falling off and dropping quickly.

Unexpected surprise: Trevor and Barbara Harrison

"The others cheeped and stared after her, but were reluctant to follow and she had to keep coming back to show them how to do it.

"They all survived and she waddled off through the hedge and down to the river and we saw them all swimming away."

Mr Harrison, 77, a former exam board worker and civil servant, added: "They just launched themselves out into the air.

"When the first one dropped out, we thought that would be the end of it. They landed safely – they're just very light little balls of fluff.

"What amazed us was she was actually able to count. She waited until all the ducklings had flown out.

"As soon as she realised they were all there, she marched off."

Once the first duckling made the leap of faith, its mother handed it over to a male duck nearby before flying back up to the sixth floor, to encourage its siblings.

But the endeavour was not without peril.

Mr Harrison noticed a number of crows lurking in the area, waiting to pick off a helpless duckling.

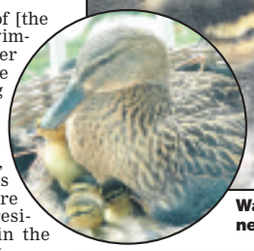
He said: "I dashed downstairs and shooed them off.

"By this time, several people in the flats were leaning over and watching the proceedings. My wife gave the last two or three ducklings a helping hand.

"The last we saw of [the mother], she was swimming down the river with all the little ducklings following her."

Since leaving with her first brood on Thursday, May 6, the mother duck has returned to lay more eggs, taking up residence once again in the Harrisons' herb box.

Watch the video at kingstonguardian.co.uk



Waddle we do now? The ducklings in the nest; mother duck, left Picture: Barbara Harrison

Adult education service gets 'good' rating from Ofsted

Kingston Adult Education has achieved a "good" Ofsted rating despite uncertainty about the service's location.

The service, which has already moved from north Kingston to Surbiton and could move again to a former office block in New Malden, achieved a "good" rating in every category of the report.

Councillor Andrea Craig, lead member for children, youth and adult learning, said: "This has been a particularly challenging period for Kingston Adult Education.

"Moving premises was not easy for the staff or students. To have significantly improved standards during this time is testament to hard work, commitment and determination.

"This is such good news and will help give these students in Kingston the best opportunities to find employment."

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Teen dream of £1.2m to save Mini history

REPORTER
RACHAEL BURFORD
rachael.burford@
london.newsquest.co.uk

A teenager has launched a campaign to raise more than a £1m and save a Surbiton landmark from becoming flats.

Kyle Stanger, 18, has set himself the mammoth task of getting together the £1.2m needed to buy the TDV building, known as the "birthplace of the Mini Cooper", in Hollyfield Road.

Planning permission has been granted for the garage to be turned into flats but, if successful, Mr Stanger will turn the space into an education centre and community garage with a Cooper cafe, where people can learn about car history and study for automotive qualifications.

Mr Stanger said: "I'm Mini mad and I just think it would be a real shame if this piece of Mini Cooper and racing history was destroyed and forgotten. It can't be turned into flats."

The garage was set up by Formula 1 legend Sir Jack Brabham, who died last year.

Sir Jack won two world titles with Cooper in 1959 and 1960.

The vacant garage, which was used by the Metropolitan Police after the world-beating Cooper team left the area, is currently used as storage space.

'Mini mad': Kyle Stanger wants to buy the TDV building

Cooper fans from around the world have been posting pictures of their Minis on a Facebook page called Save the home of the Mini Cooper, set up by Mr Stranger. The page has received more than 3,000 likes in just a week. But he will need a lot more support than that if he is to realise his dream.

A Kickstarter campaign set up to raise the funds has so far brought in £187.

And with just 54 days to go until the campaign closes, Mr Stanger needs to raise £22,219 every single day to reach the target.

Mr Stanger said: "Obviously it's a lot of money. Me and my father are trying to save a piece of motorsport history.

"The significance this building has is monumental to motorsport, classic cars and to every modified Mini around the world.

"It's the birth place of the Mini Cooper. My old man has been in the automotive industry since he was 14 years old and has taught automotive engineering and science for 24 years.

"We are drawing up some plans and trying to get everyone that we can possibly think of behind this project."

To donate to the save the home of the Mini campaign, visit **kickstarter.com/projects/715377145/save-the-home-of-the-cooper**.

Grant to bring news to tenants

A residents' advocacy group has been given an £8,000 grant to create a newsletter keeping council tenants up-to-date on issues that affect them.

The Kingston Federation of Residents was handed the cash by the Big Lottery Fund, which announced 116 grants worth more than £1m this week.

Federation chairman Paul Johnston said: "Newsletters are the main way that most residents' associations communicate with council tenants and leaseholders about key issues and events in their local area.

"The uptake of computer-based communications is traditionally low on the borough's council estates, making hard copy communications such as newsletters an indispensable tool for getting important messages across.

"The project will also help to encourage youth employment through newsletter distribution contracts."

The federation believes the newsletter will play a key role in keeping Kingston Council's 6,500 tenants informed of changes to the management of their homes.

Visit **kingstonfed.org**.

OFFICE HOMES: Kingston Council has been notified of plans to turn Surbiton offices into flats. Residents can air their views on the scheme, which plans to convert offices at 160 Ewell Road into four two-bedroom unit homes and one single-bedroom unit. Visit kingston.gov.uk before Friday, June 12.

MP RESCUED: The day of the state opening of Parliament was a busy one for Kingston police. Officers were posted outside Scotland Yard and even had to step in to protect a UKIP MP from anti-austerity protesters who approached him as he waited for a bus. The force tweeted: "Kingston officers stepped in and rescued @DouglasCarswell."

PUB UPDATE: The Druid's Head pub in Kingston Market Place has applied for permission to add a new awning and replace lights. Owner Greene King also hopes to refurbish the listed building's interior. Kingston Council officers will decide the application after a consultation period ends on Friday, June 19.

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ONLINE: All your letters in full online at **kingstonguardian.co.uk/yoursay**

Letters may be edited for space, clarity and legal reasons.

ONLINE OPINION

Comment on stories at **kingstonguardian.co.uk**

Leader meeting postponed after councillor's death

Of course it is appropriate to cancel the extraordinary meeting. Surely it was merely to satisfy liberal perception after conceding there is no suggestion of wrongdoing just a desire for negative publicity.

KOTT

£8k to maintain tumbling phone box sculpture

Money well spent.

BEVERLEY RA

Teen's drive to save birthplace of Cooper Cars

This site has a fantastic long history, both with Brabham & as the Met Police Traffic garage, TDV. It was such a wrong move when the Met moved out of there. Wish him luck; maybe RBK could lend him some support for this.

HOVE EX-PAT

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Here's hoping MP keeps his pledges

When asked whether he would always vote in line with fellow Conservatives, I was pleased to hear that James Berry said he thought he would vote for what was "right for the people of Kingston".

At his first cabinet meeting, the Prime Minister said that, in this Parliament, every decision, policy and programme would be initiated so that everyone in our country had the chance to make the most of their life, and so that those people who could not work would receive the support they needed at every stage of their lives.

According to a study in 2014, Kingston is one of the 20 most prosperous areas in the country.

However, it may be worth reminding both of these men about some key points regarding Kingston.

Firstly, one in eight children under 16 is living in poverty, which is linked to an increased risk of inequality of opportunity, hardship, deprivation and exclusion.

A study of child poverty in Kingston concluded that, of those households living in poverty, an increasingly greater proportion were in work, as opposed to being out of work.

One in 10 children are eligible for free school meals.

Children are classed as eligible for free school meals if they are aged five to 16 and their parents are out of work or receiving child tax credits, with an income in Kingston of no more than £16,190.

Some 3,860 people were receiving employment and support allowance and incapacity benefits, while 790 were receiving carers allowances and 810 were disabled.

In all, 2,507 vouchers (5,492 people) were referred for support through food banks in 2013-14.

These were often issued for people where there was low income and no financial safety net or remaining savings.

A report on the Kingston food bank by Love Kingston said there is no "typical"recipient.

Job loss, sickness, reduction in income or an unexpected bill can push a family into crisis, unable to buy basic food as they try to juggle energy, housing and food costs.

Some 377 homeless applicants were on the housing register at the start of the financial year 2014-15.

Of these, only 65 were given permanent housing during the year 2014-15. While the number of people with the greatest needs may be low in Kingston, it is worth remembering that they are still real people – parents, children, neighbours, friends, employees and work colleagues that we may know.

Mahatma Gandhi once said: "The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members."

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development said in a statement: "There is a continuous discussion in the UK about maximum levels of benefits and benefit caps, but an informed debate about minimum levels of income or social protection floors could help to protect vulnerable people."

As the new Parliament starts to work through its policies, I hope James Berry and David Cameron will maintain their pledges towards all people in Kingston, and that scrutiny of their voting records will prove it to be so.

S PACE
Tolworth

Exceptional councillor

I was the leader of the Liberal Democrat councillors in 1990 when Chrissie Hitchcock was first elected.

My last term as a councillor ended in 1998, but Chrissie kept in touch and was a loyal and reliable friend, as well as being a formidable ward councillor.

She chaired the Kingston Town Neighbourhood, was twice mayor and did thousands of good things, but above all she was a fantastic human being and never let municipal pomposity get in the way of having a good laugh.

Her opponents sometimes underestimated her – that was their mistake.

To serve as a local councillor and be repeatedly re-elected by the voters on every occasion over 25 years is an exceptional achievement. And Chrissie was an exceptional woman.

If I remember rightly, this is the first time I have written a letter to the Kingston Guardian since I stood down as leader of the council in 1997.

I have broken an 18-year silence to pay tribute to Chrissie Hitchcock and underline the point that she was one of the finest councillors I had the privilege to serve alongside.

Kingston was lucky to have been served by her for so long.

JOHN TILLEY
Kingston

Borough view

Michael Davison snapped this photo of a swan having a snooze with its young. To see your photo featured in Borough View, email it with details of where you took it to jon.sharman@london.newsquest.co.uk.

An abusive Lycra lout

Last week, I was on a pedestrian crossing in Brighton Road, Surbiton, and narrowly avoided being hit by a speeding Lycra-clad cyclist who did not stop for me, unlike the bus in one direction and cars in the other.

It was difficult for me to avoid the cyclist because I have a disability.

Had I been more disabled, or elderly, the accident would have been extremely serious.

As they passed, the cyclist shouted at me "I don't have to stop" and also waved a fist at me.

I would like to thank the kind bus driver for taking time to check I was OK and offer support.

The cycling lobby has just created an opponent, thankfully an unharmed one.

CHRISTINE WHITE
Via email

Council's box junction earner

The box junction in Ewell Road, Surbiton, is being used by the council as a money generator.

The number of people charged with an offence here when they have stopped for mere seconds at the very edge of the box, in front of the traffic lights, without causing any obstruction to turning traffic, is cause for concern.

Any car putting their brake lights on to slow down here is at risk of a penalty notice as the council deems the putting on of brake lights to be evidence of stopping on the box, regardless of whether the vehicle has stopped or is simply slowing down.

I think awareness should be raised of the issue and drivers warned to prevent an unfair taxation.

NICOLA HAYES
Via email

TWEETS of the WEEK

@ladies_kingston: New Malden stock of gelatine has run out. Anyone guess we have a competition!

@Annabelle_ML: Check your sheds for bamboo canes folks, Surbiton bugs need shelter! #surbiton #wildlife

Performance is a rail mess

As I was standing at Kingston station, reading your article on how South West Train's performance figures are better than Southern's, I watched my Waterloo-bound train get cancelled.

That was the second time in a week, and approximately the 50th time since the new year.

This is "to reduce congestion" towards Waterloo.

South West Trains may have improved its punctuality figures, but only at the cost of cancelling ours.

TIM LIDBETTER
Kingston

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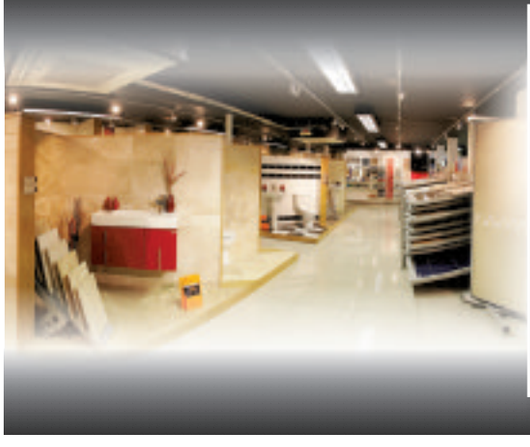

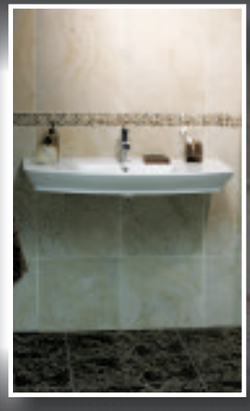

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Vibe

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Summer sounds

Kingston Philharmonia is putting on an evening of English classical music this summer.

Under the baton of guest conductor Scott Wilson, the orchestra will be performing Vaughan Williams' Wasps Overture and the Oration for Cello and Orchestra by Frank Bridge. Julian Metzger will be acting as soloist.

Bridge wrote the Oration for Cello and Orchestra in 1930 and many see it as an elegy for those who fell in the First World War.

Wilson said: "This is an extremely powerful piece of music, which I am sure our audience will appreciate."

● **Kingston Philharmonia: An evening of English Music; All Saints Church, Market Square, Kingston; July 11, 7.30pm; £12 on the door or from wegottickets.com.**

Victoriana

What the Dickens, a play following the exploitations and misadventures of a Victorian family, is coming to the Rose this month.

The Fortitude Wentworth's are a family who have tumbled into poverty, forcing them into a life of crime.

This irreverent look back at the Victorian era is staged by the Surrey based drama troup Bloomin' Arts.

The group regularly work with more than 70 adults with learning disabilities, encouraging participation in music, dance, singing, drama and art to create inspirational performances.

What the Dickens is part of the Rose's Let Me In festival, which celebrates the work by, for and about young people with a range of disabilities.

● **What the Dickens; the Rose Theatre; Wednesday, June 17, 8pm; £5 to £12; rosetheatrekingston.org.**

ARTS FOR ALL

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH ARTS FESTIVAL

● **Various locations across Kingston, July 3 to July 19; visit iyafestival.org.uk.**

TREVOR BLACKMAN

The International Youth Arts Festival 2015 has been launched and is set to celebrate the creative talents of young artists once again, *writes Daniel Tripp*.

More than 100 events will be taking place from July 3 to 19 throughout Kingston with a mixture of ticketed and free events.

Now in its seventh year, the festival continues to draw on a substantial talent pool from Kingston, as well as dancers, actors, singers and musicians from around the world.

It will be the first under the management of new festival director Trevor Blackman, who has replaced Aniela Zaba after the first six years at the helm.

Mr Blackman said: "I suppose what appealed me to take this role is in the title itself, international, that reads of people coming here, gathering here in Kingston.

"The great thing when we talk about international, it's not just about the UK, it's also about the whole of Europe, Brazil, America and India, all coming to one place for two weeks to showcase what they can do in the creative industries."

Among the many highlights will be The Pied Piper of Hamelin, directed by National Youth Music founder Jeremy James Taylor, and Olivier award-winning hip-hop dance company Boy Blue Entertainment.

There is also a buskers vs art event, where young street artists will perform alongside visual artists in Kingston town centre.

Behind the scenes, the festival is once again being organised by a large team of dedicated young volunteers.

Volunteer co-ordinator Emma Townsend said: "It's a great opportunity to work with a large arts festival here in Kingston and there are lots of different opportunities for volunteers to get involved

"Even if you are not interested in art you can still come along get involved and meet new people."

Vibe SHORTS

GOOD FOR THE SOUL: Dynamic soul band Soul Rites will be performing at the bandstand in Canbury Gardens on Sunday. The band will be playing classic soul hits in their two-hour set, on the banks of the Thames.

● **Soul Rites; Kingston Riverside, Bandstand, Canbury Park Gardens; Sunday, June 7, 3pm to 5pm; free.**

PINTER PLOT: Harold Pinter's Betrayal is being performed at the Cornerhouse for three days this month. The plot revolves around married couple Emma and Robert and their close friend Jerry who find themselves in a complicated love triangle. Pinter's tale of adultery and deceitfulness is being performed by the Green Theatre Company and contains strong language.

● **Betrayal; the Cornerhouse, Douglas Road, Surbiton; June 11 to June 13, 7.45pm; £8; thech.org.**

READY TO RUN: Entries are now open for this year's Garmin Kingston Run challenge. Runners can choose between three distances – an eight-mile, 16-mile or full marathon 26.2-mile course, all setting off from Kingston's Ancient Market Place.

● **Garmin Kingston Run; Sunday, October 11; visit humanrace.co.uk.**

CHARITY CAKES: Minima Yacht Club is inviting people in for homemade cakes and tea in aid of charity Sail 4 Cancer on Sunday. You can enjoy the view at the riverside sailing club from 1.30pm with all the proceeds going to help UK families living with cancer.

● **Sail 4 Cancer benefit; Minima Yacht Club, 48A High Street, Kingston; Sunday, June 7, 1.30pm to 5pm; free.**

Vibe

FOR MORE ON THESE AND OTHER STORIES VISIT kingstonguardian.co.uk/vibe

Picture: Jack Henry Bridgland

SINGING OUR OWN SONG

When pop bands split, that is often the end of the road, leaving fans distraught they can no longer hear their favourite songs played live, *writes Tom Ambrose*.

But for Birmingham's UB40, the split has taken on a different meaning – fans can hear those songs once more but are spoilt for choice as there are now two line-ups.

UB40 continue to tour while UB40 Reunited, featuring original band members Astro, Ali Campbell and Mickey Virtue, also perform in their own right.

Perhaps it is similar to a child choosing between parents after the breakdown of a family, but trumpeter and vocalist Astro says it is the fans he feels sorry for.

He says: "It is a bit weird for us, it is more confusing for the fans really.

"We have made it clear on all of our advertising who they are coming to see but the other lot – we call them the dark side – never once announced it isn't the original line-up.

"It is creating confusion, but I try not to even think about them. We are just looking to the future now.

"If the fans want to see UB40 and hear the songs they love then look no further, we are the original vocalists.

"People know what they are going to get with us so it's no competition really."

The band play Kew the Music at the Royal Botanic Gardens in July and although Astro has never visited, he cannot wait for the occasion.

He says: "I'm really, really looking forward to coming to Kew.

"I am hoping it is going to be a beautiful, sunny day and it will be great to see people having picnics – yeah, I'm really excited.

"I would prefer to perform outdoors all the time because you cannot beat England in the summer and I mean it when I say that."

Those are bold words from a man who is in the middle of a world tour which takes in far-flung outposts such as Kuala Lumpar and Papua New Guinea. But the stage is where Astro is happiest and he admits he will take any excuse to avoid spending time in the studio.

He says: "I hate being in the studio. You can't beat getting out there live and seeing everyone singing along.

"We don't even rehearse some of the songs now. It's because we have played them so much it gets boring, but it is totally different when you are out there on stage and seeing the crowd's reaction."

> I hate being in the studio. You can't beat getting out there live and seeing everyone singing along

The Vibe interview

UB40 REUNITED

● Kew Gardens, Kew Road, Kew; July 10; £44.50; visit kew.org

Vibe WHAT'S ON

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Questions hold THE KEY

According to James Prideaux of Hunters, these key questions are essential to ask any estate agent:

1) Why are the current owners moving or selling the property? Whilst it may just be a change in scenery or new job location, you have to be sure that the previous tenants aren't moving because of the location the house is in being poor, an issue with the property itself, i.e. work needs to be done or an issue with crime in the area

2) Have the sellers already bought a new property? Say for instance, the sellers have not yet confirmed a new property, this could potentially jeopardise your purchase of the new property, due to the current owners having a larger likelihood of pulling out if they themselves can not find a new property. If they have confirmed the purchase of a new property, how long through the process of moving are they?

3) Is there room to extend? Many homeowners tend to see the bigger picture when looking at potential new property, i.e. whether they can convert rooms, add extensions or re-do the garden.

This being said, many home conversions tend to require planning permissions. With this in mind, it is vital that you get to the bottom of exactly what is allowed to be done on the new property. Also, make sure you take the fact that, if you are looking to re-do certain aspects of the property, then 1; you have the budget, and 2; you are comfortable living in a fix up for a while.

4) How many offers are on the table? Existing and previous offers show great insights into the flexibility of the seller. If there are little or no offers at present, it may show that the flexibility in which the seller is willing to price the property at is very low, which means you then need to re-evaluate whether you have the budget for the property.

As well as this, the lower the offers, the larger the likelihood of the property either having underlying structural issues, or legal issues in terms of planning, therefore it is essential you ask this at every property you are investing your interest in to.

5) How long has it been on the market? Every time you see a newly posted property online, it is sometimes the case that these properties have already been taken down on a few occasions. You need to ask yourself, why has this property not been sold yet? Estate Agents will always be honest with a properties.

Visit huntersnet.co.uk for more information.

Schooling's vital role

A new survey on the importance of good local schools to home movers shows four out of five parents say this is a priority when deciding where to move to.

Streets Ahead already list all the nearest schools to each property they advertise. And according to a new Rightmove survey, most parents will check out the quality of local schools before deciding on where to buy.

Eighty-four per cent of London parents questioned told Rightmove they would consider moving to be near a good school, while over 30 percent without children said they also consider schools when deciding to move.

The results were replicated nationally, so now Rightmove will feature new school information on each of its property listings, including catchment areas, as well as the latest Ofsted ratings in a clickable School Checker feature.

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FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Obituary Notice

FRANK NATHANIEL THOMPSON

Sadly passed away on 23rd May 2015 after a brave fight against Mesothelioma Cancer. He will be greatly missed by all his family and friends. Funeral to take place on Monday June 8th at St Luke's Church, Burton Road, Kingston-Upon-Thames at 1.00pm.

Obituary Notice

Audrey Luscombe
Passed away suddenly at home on 8th May 2015 aged 90. Funeral Service on 9th June at Kingston Crematorium at 12.20pm. Family flowers only. Donations if desired to "British Heart Foundation" may be sent to Andrew Holmes & Son (Chessington)

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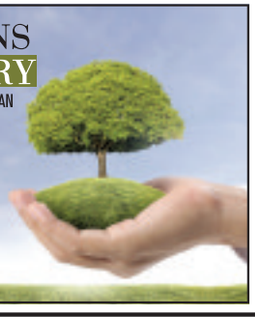

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STAR IN A CAR:

SAMANTHA FOX, TV personality, singer and fomer model

Sam Fox is best known for being the face of Page Three, **writes Matt Westcott.**

The former glamour model was a singer before modelling took over and went on to have a number three hit in the UK with Touch Me.

In recent times Sam has been seen on I'm A Celebrity and Celebrity Come Dine with Me and as well as performing with her band has starred in the British horror flick 'Seven Cases'.

Sam will be performing at Let's Rock at Temple Newsam, Leeds on June 20. For more on Sam visit www.samfox.com or follow her on Twitter @SamFoxCom.

What was your first car? My Dad found it in the local paper. It was a black Mini with red stripes with an 'S' at the end of the stripe. It cost £500.

How many times did it take to pass your test? The first two times I took my test in London in two BSM cars and then in my own Mini in London. I passed the fourth time in Wales because my Dad saw that a woman who had failed 100 times finally passed hers – but in Wales – so I was sent there and it worked for me too!

Who would be your fantasy passenger and where would you go? Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie. Two beautiful passengers. I'd drive them to Southend for fish and chips!

What is your dream car? The Delorean from 'Back To The Future'. It looks good and you can go anywhere.

How would you describe your driving style? Good and careful.

Tell me one driving anecdote from your past? Hitting my garage door in the dark made a big noise. It was a new BMW Z3 with a long front. I got used to that quickly.

What are you listening to? I love Ellie Goulding – great driving music.

What do you drive now? That BMW Z3 and I drive a Mini as well.

MOTOR MOUTH

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Celebrate at Silverstone

It's not just the Silverstone Classic race meeting that will be celebrating its Silver Jubilee this July, as it's also 25 years since Honda launched its game-changing NSX.

Taking its name from the words New, Sportscar and eXperimental, Honda's revolutionary NSX was technically advanced and pitched directly at cars from the likes of Porsche and Ferrari.

While the Honda badge may not quite have had the same lustre as its rivals, the Japanese company was running rings around both of its Italian rivals in F1 at that time.

Turn the clocks back 25 years and Ayrton Senna was en route to the second of his three World Championship titles – all secured with McLaren-Honda.

The legendary Brazilian was also involved in the initial testing of the NSX at the Suzuka GP circuit in Japan, and later in working with the company's engineers on the finalisation of the suspension and handling set-up.

Boasting such a pedigree – and with Honda poised to launch an all-new NSX – it's no surprise that the NSX Club Britain is expecting a record turn-out of more than 60 models for its special Silver Jubilee track parade at the Silverstone Classic.

The Saturday lunchtime cavalcades will be given over to Japanese sports cars. As well as the notable NSX celebrations, there will be 300 Mazda MX-5s celebrating the 25th anniversary of the UK launch of the iconic roadster plus parades marking important milestones for the Toyota MR2 Mk 1 (30 years), Nissan Skyline GTR and Nissan Sunny/Pulsar GTI-R (both 25 years).

For more information on the event (July 24-26) and the various activities planned over the weekend visit silverstoneclassic.com

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So near, yet so far for Royals

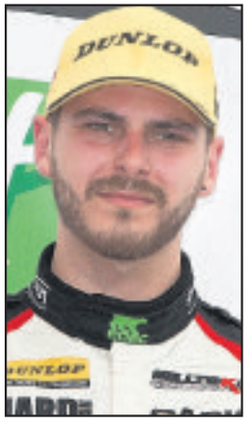
Kingston Royals were the nearly boys and girls of the London Regional Swimming Championships at the Olympic Pool on Saturday.

Filip Blazevic finished fourth in the U14 boys' 50m breast stroke (35.10 seconds) and 50m freestyle (27.52).

Dylan Conway, *right*, was fourth in the U15 boys' 50m breast stroke (33.80), while Caitlin Thomson finished in the same position in the U16 girls' 50m breast stroke (38.07).

Issei Kuzuki was fourth in the U15 boys' backstroke (30.70).

More sport: kingstonguardian.co.uk



The leading man: New Malden racing driver Tom Onslow-Cole

Team OC stays top in Holland

New Malden's Tom Onslow-Cole had double cause for celebration at the weekend, *writes Stuart Amos*.

The 28-year-old racing driver – and team-mates Paul White and Thomas Jaegar – helped RAM Racing finish second at the Hankook 12 hour Zandvoort race in Holland on Saturday.

RAM Racing's Mercedes SLS AMG GT3 had led after the opening six hours, but could not hold on to the advantage as the team slipped behind Hofor-Racing, who triumphed by one minute 14 seconds.

The result meant RAM remained at the top of the 24 Hour Series A6 class standings after three rounds, with Onslow-Cole the lead driver in the class by three points from team-mate White.

The success came at the end of a month that saw Onslow-Cole land a drive in the Turkish round of the FIA World Rally Cross Lites Championship in October.

Onslow-Cole blew 11 other hopefuls out of the water at the inaugural Rally Cross Talent Search at the Lydden Hill circuit in Kent.

"Rally cross has always excited me and I've always wanted to have a go, but it's not always that easy to just pick and choose what you want to do," he said.

"Winning this prize puts me on a platform within the sport that I can then go and build on – I'd love to do more after this. I want to say thanks to the guys at World RX for inviting me to be a part of this."

Onslow-Cole is next in action at the fourth round of the 24 Hour Series in France on July 10.

BUSY BOY: Irish gymnast Jack Neill barely has time to call his own

Success is no cake walk

SPORTS EDITOR
STUART AMOS
samos@
london.newsquest.co.uk

Finding that balance between schoolwork and competing at the highest level is tough, but a Tolworth Gymnastics Club rising star is doing just that.

Glyn School's Jack Neill was recently crowned the British U18 pommel horse champion at the British Gymnastics Championships.

The 17-year-old Irish international, who began his gymnastics life aged five years old at Tolworth, also finished third on the parallel bars and fifth in the all-round competition.

Neill has also competed at the 2012 European Championships and 2013 European Youth Olympics, and hopes to be at October's World Championships in Glasgow.

Competing at such a level means he trains for more than 20 hours a week on top of his school studies.

That only serves to make his achievement in securing an offer from Cambridge University to study engineering – which he hopes to do after taking a gap year to concentrate on his gymnastics – all the more impressive.

He said: "Staff at Glyn have always been hugely supportive of my gymnastics and also provided academic support whenever I've needed it.

"Last summer I took three AS-levels when I was out in Bulgaria competing at the European Championships – the school made arrangements with the British Council for me to do my exams when I was there, and stayed in touch to check how the competition was going."

Glyn's head of sixth form Joe Gale said: "Jack has a great work ethic.

"I was his biology teacher for two years and saw no sign of the huge amounts of work he was putting in to his gymnastics, as his work was always done on time and to a high standard."

He added: "Jack's very humble and many of the other students were unaware of his success until we persuaded him to let us show one of his performance clips in assembly. They gave him a standing ovation at the end – so the whole school is incredibly proud of him and what he's achieved, and we can't wait to see more."

Juggling act: Tolworth Gymnastics Club's Jack Neill has learned to combine his studies with competing at the highest level

Casuals to spare the Hammers' blushes

Corinthian Casuals have come to the rescue of Premier League West Ham United to save a European youth tournament from the axe, *writes Stuart Amos*.

The Hammers' Upton Park home had been due to host a festival of international football this Sunday.

But their confirmed participation in the Europa League has forced off-season pitch renovation work to be brought forward, leading to the cancellation of the West Ham Tournament.

Casuals' U13 team were one of more than 40 teams due to appear at the Boleyn, but have now offered to host the event at the 11th hour for teams in their age group from France, Jersey and across the UK.

Casuals' U13 team boss Peter Doherty said: "It's not the greatest venue in the world, but our history rivals many professional teams.

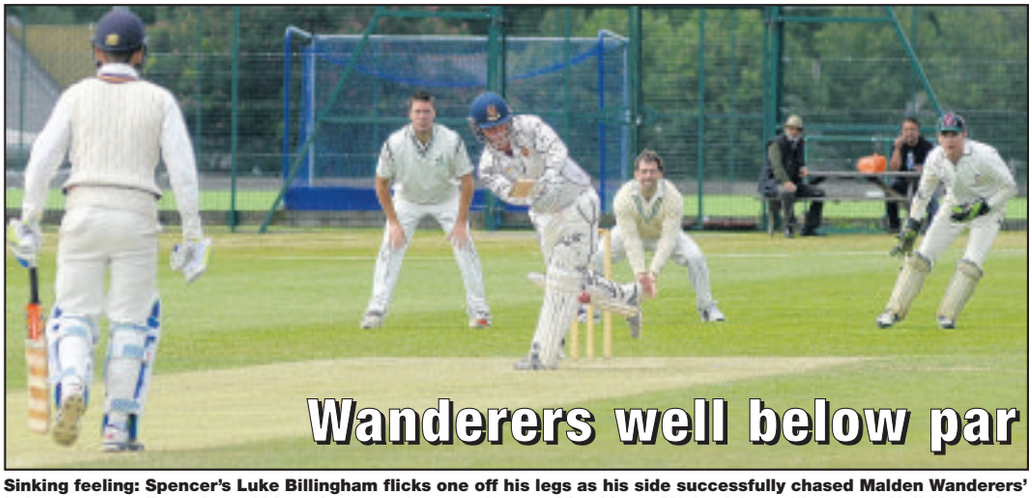
"I'm just glad we can offer at least a small consolation to some of the teams and hopefully they will enjoy the day and leave with happy memories of visiting our club."

GB sweat in Poland

Surbiton's Moe Sbihi and the Team GB men's eight paid the price for having to contest an extra race at the European Championships on Sunday.

The Brits, featuring Molesey Boat Club's Sbihi in the engine room, lost to Germany by just two seconds in the final as they collected a silver medal in Poznan.

The 2013 and 2014 world champions were forced to win the repechage on Saturday to make it through to the final six after finishing third in their heat – behind Russia and the Netherlands – on Friday.



Wanderers well below par

Sinking feeling: Spencer's Luke Billingham flicks one off his legs as his side successfully chased Malden Wanderers' below par 156 all out. It could have been much worse for stand-in skipper Michael Cottrell's men as Neil Mander's (61) 65-run ninth wicket partnership with Giles Puckle (27) saw Wanderers gain some respectability having been 76 for eight at one stage. Mander then claimed figures of 3-41 to have Spencer wobbling at 39 for three in reply before easing to a five-wicket win that kept them at the summit of Surrey Championship Division One SP91745

SPORTS*brief*

NEW SIGNING: Kingstonian have added Hendon midfielder Peter Dean to their squad for the coming campaign. Dean made 40 appearance for the Greens last term after switching from Wealdstone – with whom he lifted the Ryman Premier League crown – last summer.

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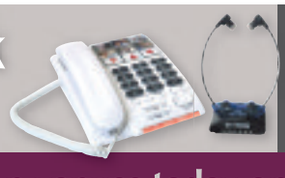

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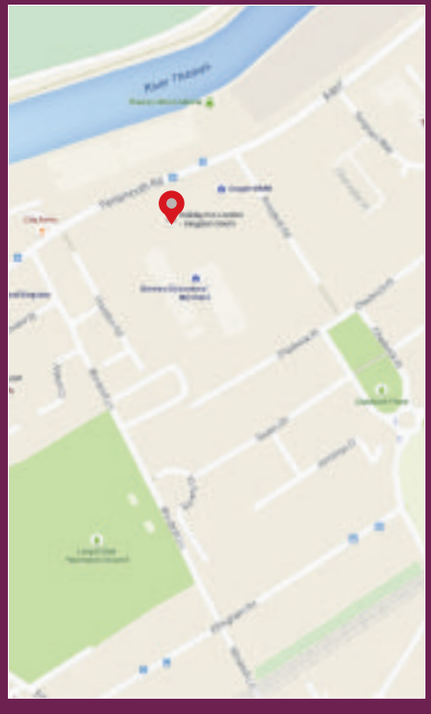

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